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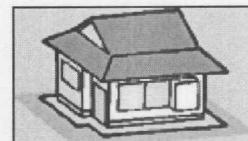
Add Images to Excel Projects

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By Helen Bradley

When preparing charts for readers who aren't mathematically inclined, why not make them more fun and less intimidating by using pictures instead of bars? Matching images to the chart's subject matter adds more depth to your presentation. Microsoft Excel includes tools for replacing bars and markers with images, adding images to charts, and saving charts from a worksheet. Here are some ways you can put such features to work on your data.

Images as Chart Bars

You can replace bars, columns, or areas on most standard or 3-D charts with images (Figure 1). To try this, click on a series on a chart or select a single bar or column. Right-click and choose Format Data Series (or Format Data Point) and add an image by choosing the Patterns tab and Fill Effects | Picture | Select Picture. Once you've selected a picture, click on Insert and set the option for image scaling. The best options are Stack or Stack and Scale to. If you use the latter option, set the number of units that equal one image. Repeat for all the series or bars as desired. Don't worry if your picture looks "squished" in the Format Data Series pane (Figure 2), it will show up correctly in the chart.

**Figure 2**[ENLARGE](#)

There is a shortcut to the process that lets you use a clip-art image rather than an image from a file. Select the data series or data point and choose Insert | Picture | Clip Art. Once you've added the image, use the Fill Effects | Picture tab dialog to scale the clip-art image as you would if you had used an image from a file.

You may find that the typical width of a bar in a chart is smaller than desirable for the image you use. To alter this, right-click on a series, choose Format Data Series | Options. Decrease the Gap Width to make the bars wider and if desired, add an overlap to widen the bars or columns even more.

Images as Data Markers

Using a similar process, you can add data markers to a line chart, an XY scatter chart, or even a bubble chart. Copy an image to the Clipboard and then select the line (or other chart) series and choose Edit | Paste to paste the image in place of the current marker. You can also click on the chart series and use the Insert | Picture | Clip Art option to use a clip-art image as a data marker.

If an image isn't the right size or shape or needs cropping, insert it in your worksheet and use the tools on the Picture toolbar to crop or resize it. Copy it to the Clipboard and then paste it into the chart.

Images as Chart Backgrounds

You can also add an image behind your chart, placing it either behind the (larger) chart area or the plot area, which is the area covered by the bars or columns but doesn't include the surrounding chart elements. With the chart open on your screen, click on either of the areas. (If you're unsure what you have selected, read the name of the selection from the Name box on the Formula bar.)

Right-click on your selection and choose Format Chart Area (or Format Plot Area) and then the Patterns | Fill Effects | Picture. Click on Select Picture, locate the image file to use, click on Insert, and then on OK twice. When you add an image to the chart area, you may need to remove the fill from the plot area so you can see

the image. To do this, right-click on the plot area, choose Format Plot Area | Patterns and set Area to None.

The bars, columns, data markers, and chart and plot areas aren't the only chart elements that you can replace with images. You can also add images to the floors and walls of 3-D charts as well as to the legend area of charts. Try right-clicking on a chart element and selecting Format and then see whether the Fill Effects button lets you access the Picture tab. If this fails, however, don't give up. Instead, copy a picture to the Clipboard, select the element to replace, and choose Edit | Paste. One of the options will work for most of the elements in your charts.

To use the same image in different forms, as in data markers or legend icons, open your image in your graphics software and recolor or resize it for use in your chart. With judicious coloring, one image can be used multiple times on one chart.

Take a Picture

You can also save a chart as an image file so you can, for example, add it to a Web page. Although you can do this programmatically, a simple solution is to save the worksheet as a Web page using File | Save As. When you do this, the chart is saved as a separate GIF file, which you can then use as you would any image file.

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